Language and Definitions

These are some terms that we use throughout our Neurodiversity Resources. Reading through these and understanding these terms is an important place to start. We highly encourage readers to check out the sources both in and outside of this document to learn more.

ABLEISM

Oppression, prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination against disabled people on the basis of actual or presumed disability.[1]

Some common ableist practices that target neurodivergent people include infantilizing neurodivergent people (or the practice of treating or portraying them younger than their actual age), teasing people for neurodivergent traits such as stimming or picky eating, and speaking for/over neurodivergent people.

Ableism can even be as simple as maintaining a space that is not accessible.

ACCESSIBILITY

How well a person with atypical ways of thinking, communicating, sensing, or moving, can easily navigate an environment.[2]

NEURODIVERSITY

Refers to the range of differences in human minds and behavioral traits.[3]

NEURODIVERSE

Used only when referring to a group of people with more than one type of cognitive way of thinking (i.e. a neurodiverse group of students).[4] This is not the correct term for individual neurodivergent people.

NEURODIVERGENT (ND)

Having a mind that functions in ways that diverge from the dominant standards of what society would consider "normal" functions.[5] Neurodivergent people include, but are not limited to, autistic people, people with ADHD, and people with dyslexia and/or other learning disabilities.

NEUROTYPICAL (NT)

People whose brains work in basically the same way as most other people, or whose ways of thinking and processing information are considered more or less "normal" by the standards of their society.[6]

PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

The practice of putting people first in language, as in "people with autism" or "people with disabilities." This is highly controversial, and a majority of the autistic community prefers to just be called autistic and may be offended by person-first language. It is okay to say the autistic community, but every person is different, so always check in with the individual to see what they are comfortable with.

(1) https://www.autistichoya.com/p/definitions.html
(2) https://www.autistichoya.com/p/definitions.html
(3) https://neuroqueer.com/neurodiversity-terms-and-definitions/
(4) https://neuroqueer.com/neurodiversity-terms-and-definitions/
(5) https://neuroqueer.com/neurodiversity-terms-and-definitions/
(6) https://www.autistichoya.com/p/definitions.html

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